

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 AID-05 EB-07 SAM-01 /098 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4673

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 6460

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR ET

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN FONMIN ON ERITREA

REF: ADDIS 6055

1. AMB QUESTIONED FONMIN KIFLE ON ERITREA DURING CONVERSATION MAY 31. KIFLE SAID "THERE IS GOOD CHANCE" THAT GOE WILL MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT SOON CONCERNING ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD DISCUSSIONS WITH ERITREAN INSURGENTS.

2. SO FAR, KIFLE SAID, THE INSURGENTS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO COME UP WITH A UNIFIED NEGOTIATING POSITION, DESPITE THE MEETINGS THAT LEADERS HAD HAD IN KHARTOUM A FEW WEEKS AGO. GOE HAD BEEN AWAITING FURTHER WORD FROM SUDAN, AND HAD BEEN ANNOYED TO SEE THAT PRES NIMEIRI HAD STATED IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE (MAY 27) THAT ETHIOPIA HAD NOT BEEN MAKING ANY INQUIRIES, STRONGLY IMPLYING GOE DISINTEREST. ACTUALLY, GOE HAD MADE INQUIRIES AND WAS AWAITING SUDAN'S RESPONSE. ALSO, NIMEIRI HAD DENIED THAT "ARABS"

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ARE SUPPORTING INSURGENTS, AND GOE HAD "EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE" TO SUDAN AT THIS FALSEHOOD. AFTER ALL, THREE ARAB STATES (SYRIA,

KUWAIT, IRAQ) HAD OPENLY ANNOUNCED THEIR SUPPORT. THE GOE COULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD IF SUDANESE HAD NOT WANTED TO MENTION ARAB INTERFERENCE IN ERITREA, BUT TO MISREPRESENT KNOWN FACTS WAS A DIFFERENT MATTER. (COMMENT: THIS WILL ADD TO ALREADY STRONG GOE SUSPICIONS OF SUDANESE BIAS TOWARD ARABS AND INSURGENTS.)

3. KIFLE BELIEVED THAT MANY ARABS ARE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT ARAB SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS, REALIZING REAL DANGER OF ARAB CONFRONTATION WITH AFRICAN STATES WHO SUPPORT OAU CHARTER PROVISIONS CONCERNING NON-INTERFERENCE AND SANCTITY OF BORDERS. HE HOPED ARAB REALIZATION WOULD "KEEP SUPPORT WITHIN ACCEPTABLE LIMITS" (COMMENT: THERE IS REFRESHING REALISM IN THIS PHRASE).

4. AMB SUGGESTED THAT IN GOE'S OWN INTERESTS, IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO SHOW SOME MOVEMENT ON ERITREA, PERHAPS BY A PUBLIC STATEMENT, BEFORE THE ARAB SUMMIT IN MOGADISCIO JUNE 28, AND KAMPALA OAU MEETING IN JULY. KIFLE AGREED, REPEATING THAT HE HOPED TO MAKE A STATEMENT SOON. HE SAID GOE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT ERITREA WOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED FORMALLY AT MOGADISCIO, AND NOT AT OAU MEETING EITHER. SOME AFRICANS HAD OFFERED TO RAISE ERITREA AT KAMPALA, TO EXPOSE ARAB INTERFERENCE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, BUT KIFLE SAID GOE DID NOT WANT TO ADD TO DIVISIONS BETWEEN ARABS AND AFRICANS. (COMMENT: ALSO GOE REALIZES IT WOULD COME IN FOR HARSH CRITICISM FOR ITS SEVERE MILITARY REACTIONS IF SUBJECT OF ERITREA IS OPENED UP FOR GENERAL DEBATE IN EITHER MEETING.)

5. ETHIOPIAN-SUDANESE BORDER COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS, REPEATEDLY SCHEDULED IN KHARTOUM AND THEN POSTPONED DURING LAST SIX WEEKS, WILL NOW NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL JULY. LAST SCHEDULING HAD BEEN FOR EARLY JUNE, BUT SUDANESE REQUESTED POSTPONEMENT BECAUSE APPROPRIATE MINISTERS (TALKS WOULD COVER MANY SUBJECTS INCLUDING TRANSPORTATION, TAXES, REFUGEES, DUAL CITIZENS, ETC.) ALLEGEDLY COULD NOT BE ASSEMBLED. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH FORMAL AGENDA WOULD NOT INCLUDE ERITREA PER SE, SUBJECT WOULD CERTAINLY BE DISCUSSED IN SIDE TALKS, AND SUCH A MEETING IN KHARTOUM WOULD AT MINIMUM GIVE USEFUL APPEARANCE OF MOVEMENT OF ETHIOPIAN POSITION ON ERITREA. GOE APPARENTLY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE MEETING; SUDANESE AMB HERE HAS CONFIRMED THAT LATEST POSTPONEMENT WAS SUDANESE ACTION.)

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